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real continuum which modern pluralism and radical empiricism love to dwell upon; yet it does not, like those views, endeavor to refute the system of monism.

Finally, I may remark that monism, emphasizing symmetry and uniformity, favors current democratic ideals; whereas my own view, laying stress on distinctions and inequalities, tries to do justice to certain aristocratic motives which are in danger of being quite neglected to-day.

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PLURAL SOVEREIGNTY

EVER since I read Mr. Laski's interesting volume on *The Problem of Sovereignty*, the ideas of a pluralistic state and of pluralistic sovereignty, found there and elsewhere, have been troubling me. I felt that I had decided sympathy with the group idea in politics, I knew that I had no friendliness for the absolute state, but yet I felt uncomfortable in the presence of these ideas about plural sovereignty without quite knowing just what was the matter. The present paper is merely an attempt to make a little clearer to myself what is involved in these ideas and does not profess to offer any positive doctrine as to the proper and final meaning of sovereignty itself, for I recognize only too well with Willoughby "that there exists no other term in political science, regarding whose signification there exists such confusion and contradiction of thought, and in regard to which such an amount of dogmatism has been preached."¹

The point of departure for the new doctrine is opposition to the classic idea of the necessary unity of sovereignty as expressed in Rousseau's contention that though power may be divided, will cannot. Sovereignty, as the characteristic of the general will, is by its nature indivisible, for the will is, or is not, general. If general, it is one; if not general, it is only a particular will and can lay no claim to sovereignty. Either no state and no sovereignty, or one state and one sovereignty, is the doctrine. It is this traditional doctrine of the inherent and necessary unity of state and of sovereignty that the new doctrine opposes, contending, as I understand it, that this unity is as may be, that it is wholly a matter of fact, not deducible from the abstract ideas of either sovereignty or the state, but determinable empirically on the basis of the actual control exercised by any given state. It is not a question of the state in the abstract or of sover-

¹ *Nature of the State*, p. 185.

eighty in the abstract, but of given concrete states, and these may be one or many and their sovereignties likewise unitary or plural.

Sovereignty, as Laski sees it, is authority, and authority rests upon consent. The authority of law is merely its power to induce obedience and this power, in turn, is just the power that makes it to the interest of the subject to render obedience. Whether it is a matter of coercion or free assent, in all cases, there is no authority save as the individual's interest is evoked, either directly through his sharing in the state's purpose, or indirectly through the rewards and penalties inflicted through the agency of those who *are* directly interested. Sovereignty means nothing save as an actually effective motive working in society—it is “the ability to secure assent.”² Whatever organization of men, by means of the interest of its embodied idea, has this ability to secure assent, is sovereign. The question is not one of right, but of fact. A sovereign who is not really sovereign, is really not a sovereign. The sole problem is as to whether a given organization actually can control. If it can not, it is itself subject to some other body able in fact to command allegiance.

To ask, then, of any given political or national entity, whether it contains one sovereign or many, is to ask whether there is one dominant interest or many. More specifically, it is to ask whether the institution we call the state actually has the ability to secure the assent necessary to constitute sovereignty or whether on occasion there may not be other organizations whose hold on men may be so strong as practically to supersede the sovereignty of the state. Reference to facts seems to show that frequently interests conflicting with the state make a stronger appeal than it to the allegiance of men, an appeal so strong that the state dare not resist it and is forced to give way to a sovereignty greater than its own. Again and again the church has defied the state and, with increasing frequency, the labor unions are doing the same. If this is the case, the argument runs, we must deny sovereignty to the state in any unique or unitary sense, and recognize it as only one of the organizations in the group, competing, by its offered interests, with other organizations for the allegiance of its members.

Or, to put it from the other point of view, the individual is a center of interests which have found for their satisfaction state and church and labor union, each of which is sovereign only in the degree to which its respective interest is dominant in the individual and can determine his action. Which interest actually is to be dominant is not determinable by reference to the concept of the institution,

² *Problem of Sovereignty*, 1, 14.

but solely by the facts of the social will of the time. Sovereignty is thus not an essential attribute of a unique institution, but a function of the relation of any institution to the interests of its members. Institutions may thus be regarded as bidding competitively for the good will and allegiance of their members, that one being sovereign in any case, or at any time, which can make the most attractive bid. And that the state often fails to make that most attractive bid we need small knowledge of history to tell us.

As one considers the fundamental principle of this doctrine of sovereignty, perhaps the first impression one gets is that it does not seem to be such a startling novelty as its proponents imply, nor even, perhaps, as dangerous. Surely it was not left for latter day pluralists and pragmatists to recognize that sovereignty rests on interest and not on some bloodless abstraction out of relation to human passion. Only the fathers called it the general will, or some such name as that. T. H. Green, for instance, in distinguishing the real basis of sovereignty from its nominal embodiment, says: "This power is a much more complex and less determinate, or less easily determinable thing; but a sense of possessing common interests, a desire for common objects on the part of the people, is always the condition of its existence. Let this sense or desire—which may properly be called general will—cease to operate, or let it come into general conflict with the sovereign's commands, and the habitual obedience will cease."³ In other words, the ostensible sovereign loses the interested support of the people and sovereignty takes on another embodiment. Both this basis in interest and this possible shifting of interest are thus recognized by the older writers.

Whatever novelty the doctrine has, therefore, belongs to the inferences drawn from these facts. Just what these inferences are meant to be, however, I am unfortunately not wholly sure. But one such inference is that since the political organization representing the state in any given country is sometimes unable to control all its included groups, we must recognize the sovereignty as having passed from the state to that institution or group which has shown itself actually able to enforce its will, say a labor organization. But now what conditions of affairs do we have in such cases? When, for instance, to use an illustration of Mr. Laski's, the British miners during the war were able to hold up the government and enforce their demands, or the American railway men succeeded in securing their increases in wages and adjustment of time through threat of strike, it looks as if we had a threat of forcible resistance to established order preliminary to the overthrow of that order and the in-

³ *Principles of Pol. Obligation*, §84.

roduction of anarchy. The unions seemed to be treating with the government not as subjects, but as equals, and threatening a state of war. There seemed more than a suggestion of opposing sovereigns within the limits of the national boundaries and a challenge to settle irreconcilable demands by the ordeal of battle. But the facts are susceptible of more than one interpretation. The question would turn on whether the protesting organization were opposing its own force to that of the state and obtaining supreme power to dispose of the affairs of the nation, thus superseding the political organization, or whether it were merely bringing its organized influence to bear upon the government to act in its special interest. The fact that five or ten per cent. of the citizens organized in an industry exert pressure upon the government to do its will is only an extreme instance of a normal occurrence. It may be only a more emphatic way of registering those protests which are often the necessary means by which citizens indicate their will to the government. The protest may be made, not as an alien group against the state, but as citizens with a special interest within the state. The resultant action of the government reflects this expression of the popular will, expressed in non-legal forms it is true, but yet in substance an expression of the civic will which constitutes the state. There is here nothing to indicate the transfer of sovereignty from the political to the industrial body, nothing to suggest a plurality of sovereigns.

The case would be different in so far as the protesting body explicitly repudiated the control of the government and asserted its right to take supreme control into its own hands. It would, in this case, be denying the claim of the government to represent the general will of the people and asserting its own fulfilment of that function. The condition would be one of rebellion or insurrection and the success of the revolt might lead to the establishment of a new government or a new political organization. But, as before, there seems nothing implying plural sovereignty. The general will has asserted itself by repudiating the government, its professed representatives, or by altering the general structure of political life and adopting a new constitution. There need be involved no idea of setting up beside the state a coordinate power, or of substituting purely industrial control for political sovereignty. The whole action may be a political movement though undertaken mainly for economic ends and led by industrial leaders. The struggle might have been one, not between competing sovereignties, but between rival claimants for the single sovereignty in the state. The end and prize is a political end and the struggle is to determine whose will is to be

the dominant one in determining the form of that end. The question is as to whose idea of the political good represents the general will and is to be the organizing principle of the state.

But we may have a third case, in which it is not a matter of a group within the state exerting pressure upon the government to accomplish its ends, or of an organization forcibly opposing the government by insurrection, where, in neither case, is it a question of the sovereignty of the state as such, but only of what party or group really represents the state. In this third case we may have a group refusing to recognize the sovereignty of the state as such and insisting that in matters pertaining to its special interests it has a sovereignty coordinate with that of the state itself. Under this hypothesis, we may have the church maintaining its autonomy in all that pertains to its own doctrine and polity and refusing to recognize the right of the state to interfere. And the church may happen to be such a powerful organization in the state that the majority of citizens may feel themselves churchmen rather than citizens and act as such whenever political and religious interests seem to clash. This seems to mean that we have here no more temporary clash between the state and a subordinate group recognizing itself as such, but a permanent and self-conscious division of powers between sovereign bodies, sovereign because they are able to make effective appeal to the interests of their respective members.

The idea of plural sovereignty here seems to have some meaning, yet still there remains some difficulty in the conception. The plurality would be clear enough, if, as in the case of national states, the sovereign bodies were distinct. We would then have distinct interests appealing to distinct wills and reaching a *modus vivendi* by external negotiation and treaty. There would be no unity of subjects and hence no unitary organization. But in the case of different organizations within a national group we have no such distinctness of effective wills, the component groups overlap. The churchmen may be to a large extent workers, and all are included in the political group. The division is not between the concrete individuals, but between the various interests of these individuals. The struggle is not between individuals, but between the conflicting interests of the same individual. It is the tragedy of the divided will. When, therefore, the pluralists insist on the analysis of the national state into component sovereign bodies and deny the reality of any unitary will and sovereignty, they seem to be reckoning without their host. The analysis and delimitation of functions is not to be done by separate entities but by the common body. It is not Tom the churchman and Dick the laborer and Harry the citizen

who treat as distinct sovereign powers, but Tom, Dick and Harry, churchman, laborer and citizen at once, who work out the *modus vivendi*. The appeal made by any organization, therefore, has its power over its members limited by the whole complex of interests embodied in them. Its appeal is a partial appeal to a partial self. The response of such a self, so far as it is a reflective and intelligent response, will therefore be made only in the light of its knowledge of its own complete interests and larger self. It will act as a whole and not merely as a part. In so far, however, as it acts as a whole, it is acting from a point of view which may properly be called that of the state, for no other institution professes to represent the interests of society as a whole. It is not relevant objection to this that the actual state does not represent the true general will, but is always a class institution, for a similar objection may be made to any organization that it does not realize its idea. It remains true none the less that the state is the only institution having for its function this organization of interests and groups, and that unless one is to despair of any such organization one must turn to what is a state in fact, if not in name. Man's unique interest in the state, as Hocking says, is "his unique interest in not being torn asunder"⁴ by his competing interests or vital circuits. It is the very multiplicity of these interests and groups that distinguishes civilized life from primitive life with its few and statically determined groups and it is this that sets inevitably the fundamental problem of their organization. We may refuse to isolate the political organization and may identify it with an industrial organization, but under whatever name it may masquerade, there is bound to emerge some comprehensive body representing the principle of control in the interests of the whole and possessing authority based on its furtherance of those interests, an authority not coordinate with, but superior to, that of any special interest.

Of course, this raises the question, involved in the whole discussion, of the nature of the state as validating its claim to sovereignty, and it is upon his conception of the relation of the state to other associations that Mr. G. D. H. Cole bases his theory of social obligation. Instead of merely pointing out the actual failures in sovereignty, as does Mr. Laski, Mr. Cole takes his stand upon the distinction in function of the various associations within society, calling attention in this respect to the recent theories of corporate personalities as worked out by the English and German jurists. These associations are distinct entities and not merely subdivisions of an all-inclusive state. They differ in kind and not in extent and hence

⁴ *Int. Journal of Ethics*, XXVIII., 321.

their interests and the claims based upon them can not be merged in those of the state. Under this interpretation the state is a merely geographical division ministering only to those common interests which are geographically conditional and bearing no real relation to the bodies representing religion and industry.

In spite of this unrelatedness of these various groups, however, he is not quite ready to admit that this means anarchy. The very process of functional devolution, as he calls this coordination and delimitation of groups, will tend to make conflicts less frequent since the limits of each association will be more strictly defined. The meddling of the state with labor will be no longer possible. But yet he admits that, while "a division of spheres would obviate many of the conflicts of to-day," yet "as both religion and, still more, industry, have their relations to men in their geographical groups, the possibility of conflict can never be altogether avoided."⁵ In such cases of conflict where would sovereignty reside? "Clearly it can not lie in any one piece of machinery; either it is not embodied in any machinery at all, or else it exists only as the resultant of a system including many pieces of machinery of varying kinds."⁶ Recognizing the fact that all machinery does violence to true will, he states the problem as that of finding the fullest possible organized type of will with which, if anywhere, sovereignty must rest. Such a will can not be that of the state, the church or industry. Nothing less than society, the complex of organized associations, can be the embodiment of the true general will. That society at present lacks determinate organization makes no difference from the theoretical point of view. To give it adequate machinery to fulfil its supreme function is the business of the practical man and not the philosopher. Mr. Cole's own final suggestion that probably some form of federation in which both the state and the other functional organizations might be represented, is the best we can hope for in the way of a machine making effective the will of the sovereign society. Ultimately, the individual will himself have to make his personal choice between institutions where conflict is not to be avoided, and the principle of his choice can only be the good of society as a whole.

I have called attention to this argument of Mr. Cole's; partly because, starting from the same apparently pluralistic conception of society as that held by Mr. Laski, he yet is forced to the recognition of what seems indistinguishable from a unitary sovereignty, though at present lacking in the machinery to render it effective in reality;

⁵ "Conflicting Social Obligations," *Aristotelian Society Proceedings*, 1914-1915, p. 155.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

and partly because it reveals the difficulty involved in all discussions of political theory, that of the unfixity of fundamental terms, here the uncertainty as to the meaning of the term state. The pluralists make their point by emptying the concept of all but geographical content and then have no difficulty in opposing to it, as functionally different, the organizations of special interest, although, as a matter of fact, they are finally forced to recognize that as geographically conditioned these groups are related and that there is a good of the whole not provided for in the good of the parts. Since, however, the geographical group is the only universal group, comprising as it does the members of all groups, its own members, therefore, embodying the greatest variety of concrete and complex interests, it is hard to see why it is necessary to discard the state and recognize a new unity called organized or federalized society to be the bearer of the ultimate sovereignty. The possible improvement of political representation by the recognition of groups or guilds would seem a matter of governmental detail and not of special significance for the theory of sovereignty.

My conclusion then is, that the attempt to establish the theory of plural sovereignty, whether by proof of the actual failure of the state to maintain itself as against other organizations, or by evidence of the functional differences and coordination of groups within a given geographical area, fails because of its lack of recognition of the necessary demand for unity in the life of reason as well as by the arbitrariness of its limitations of the function of the state. Of course, one may escape from the state and its sovereignty by taking refuge in anarchy, just as one may avoid rational self control by giving rein to one's impulses, but, so long as one retains the conception of sovereignty at all, its unity in a state seems inevitable.

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IS PLEASURE OBJECTIVE?

M^R. WALLIS attempts, in two recent issues of this JOURNAL (June 5 and July 3), to give, in the interests of ethics, an "objective" definition of "pleasure." Pleasure is "the doing of a thing for its own sake, or, more accurately, that which, all things considered, should be done for its own sake." . . . Such an enterprise should not pass unchallenged, for it is not an isolated phenomenon, but is typical of a widespread contemporary impatience with the subjective, and twisting of psychological terms to behavioristic meanings. May I enter a demurrer?